

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 119521

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BAGHDAD 0931 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ADDIS ABABA,
DJIBOUTI, HAVANA, JIDDA, KHARTOUM, MOGADISCIO, MOSCOW, USUN
NEW YORK 03 MAY 78

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0931

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PORG, AF, IZ

SUBJECT: SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN: AN IRAQI VIEW

REF: (A) BAGHDAD 0913, (B) STATE 46020, (C) BAGHDAD 0871.

1. SUMMARY: FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL SOUNDS ALARM
OVER SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN. END SUMMARY
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2. FOREIGN MINISTRY COUNSELOR HADDAWI DREW USINT
POLITICAL OFFICER INTO CORNER AT SOCIAL OCCASION FOR
A SURPRISINGLY FRANK AIRING OF IRAQI WORRY OVER HORN OF
AFRICA. HADDAWI INTRODUCED THE SUBJECT BY ASKING
ABOUT USG POLICY TOWARD INDIAN OCEAN. POLOFF BRIEFED
HIM ON STATUS OF US-SOVIET NEGOTIATIONS, CONCLUDING

WITH CAVEAT THAT CURRENT SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN THE HORN AND ASSOCIATED INCREASE OF THEIR NAVAL FORCES ARE INCONSISTENT WITH THESE TALKS (REF B).

3. HADDAWI RESPONDED BY EXPRESSING SURPRISE THAT USG WAS ALLOWING SOVIETS AND CUBANS TO INCREASE PRESENCE IN AFRICA, ESPECIALLY IN STRATEGIC AREAS OF HORN. HE SUGGESTED USG NO LONGER CARED MUCH ABOUT AFRICA.

4. AFTER LETTING HADDAWI TAKE CONVERSATIONAL LEAD, POLOFF NOTED USG HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT SOVIET UNION'S LARGER INTERESTS IN DETENTE COULD NOT BE UNAFFECTED BY LACK OF SOVIET RESTRAINT IN OTHER AREAS. IT WAS NECESSARY, HOWEVER, FOR AFRICAN AND ARAB STATES TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST THE ENCROACHMENTS OF SOVIETS AND THEIR CUBAN CLIENTS. IRAQ HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS AND CUBANS, AND IT WAS NATURAL TO ASK WHY IRAQ DID NOT USE ITS INFLUENCE TO OBTAIN THEIR WITHDRAWAL. WHEREAS SOVIET PRESENCE IN HORN AFFECTED USG INTERESTS INDIRECTLY, IT AFFECTED IRAQI DIRECTLY. IRAQI PRESS, HOWEVER, NEVER EVEN MENTIONED PRESENCE OF SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA.

5. HADDAWI SAID IRAQ HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL HOW IT HANDLED RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS. PEOPLE IN FOREIGN MINISTRY WERE, HE SAID, VERY CONCERNED ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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SOVIETS AND CUBANS IN HORN. WHILE IRAQ HAS BEEN PUBLICLY SILENT, IT HAS MADE ITS VIEWS FELT. OGADEN SITUATION HAD BEEN AMBIGUOUS AND SOMALI ACTIONS UNWISE, BUT IRAQ KNOWS SOVIETS SEEK PERMANENT PRESENCE ON RED SEA. AT THIS POINT, CONVERSATION BROKE OFF AS OTHER DIPLOMATS JOINED US.

6. COMMENT: HADDAWI WAS SPEAKING IN HIGHLY INFORMAL MANNER. IF WE HAD RAISED ISSUE OF HORN AS PART OF OUR FORMAL SOUNDINGS ON NONALIGNED ISSUES (REF C), HE WOULD LIKELY HAVE REACTED WITH THE KIND OF GUARDED SUSPICION WHICH HE SHOWED ON THAT OCCASION. NONETHELESS, HADDAWI PROBABLY REFLECTED GENUINE IRAQI CONCERNS ABOUT SOVIET MOTIVES IN THE HORN. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT IRAQ WILL RESIST DISCUSSION OF THIS ISSUE AT FORTHCOMING NONALIGNED CONFERENCE, WHERE HADDAWI WILL BE NUMBER TWO ON DELEGATION. TACTICAL ALLIANCE WITH CUBA PLAYS TOO GREAT A ROLE IN IRAQI APPROACH TO NAM. NONETHELESS, IRAQ IS LIKELY TO MOVE IN DIRECTION OF GREATER CRITICISM OF SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE IN HORN. INITIATIVE OF NORMALLY SUPER CAUTIOUS IRAQI DIPLOMAT TO SPEAK SO OPENLY TO AN

AMERICAN IS ONE MEASURE OF IRAQI UNHAPPINESS. ERITREA
DOES NOT HAVE STATUS OF SACRED CAUSE ACCORDED TO
PALESTINE, BUT CUBAN INVOLVEMENT HAS PLAINLY GOT
IRAQIS UPSET.
PECK

UNQUOTE VANCE

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